

The CP Connection

The Community Partner Newsletter

Issue 6

September 2015



"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."

- Barack Obama

Greetings from the MHLA Program Office

It is hard to believe that summer is coming to an end - I hope all of you got to take a little time off or at least enjoyed some weekend travel or adventures. This summer for us here at MHLA has been very busy – we have spent much of the summer getting ready for Renewals. All those people who enrolled in October are already starting to renew – MHLA is almost 1 year old! This summer we are excited to start work with our newly created Renewals Committee (facilitated by consultant Adrian Nunez at Kenny and Company - he is funded by a Unihealth Grant). The committee includes MHLA and CCALAC staff as well as Arroyo Vista, Northeast Valley, St. Johns, Venice, Wilmington and Westside. Together we are working on coming up with strategies and best practices to try and get as many participants to renew as possible. More on this on Page 4....

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Meet the APLA Health & Wellness Center on Page 2

MHLA Fact Sheets are now available in seven (7) languages. See Page 3.

Read all about Renewals on Page 4.

We have also spent a lot of our summer trying to get the new pharmacy network started. The pharmacy network will likely launch in January 2016 and will be a hybrid of licensed pharmacies and clinic dispensaries. This is new – clinics will be able to give prescription drugs to MHLA participants from their dispensaries, although it will be important for us to know every day what those drugs are.

I can't believe that MHLA is about to have its 1st birthday! This year has gone by so fast, but we have accomplished so much. I hope you got to enjoy some well deserved rest given all the hard work we have done together.

Amy Luftig Viste
MHLA Director

Clinic Spotlight: APLA Health & Wellness

By Mikel Wadewitz

When AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA) started in 1983, HIV was a death sentence, and the organization's mission was essentially palliative—to ensure that a person's passing was full of compassionate and supportive friends, family, and volunteers. Over the course of the next 32 years, APLA expanded its mission to provide a comprehensive array of support programs and services for people living with HIV/AIDS and those at risk of acquiring HIV infection.

Like the virus and epidemic, however, APLA's mission has evolved with time. APLA Health & Wellness (APLAHW) was created in 2011 as APLA broadened its mission to bring comprehensive health care services to low-income LGBT people of color. This new, separate organization subsequently opened a center in Baldwin Hills that housed space for HIV testing, STD screening and treatment, mental health counseling, and prevention services.

That was just the beginning. The long-term plan for APLAHW was ambitious and tackled issues specific to the LGBT community. "We know that LGBT people face unique health challenges," APLAHW Chief Operating Officer Vallerie D. Wagner notes. "They often deal with stigma, discrimination, and rejection by families and communities. In addition, many medical providers don't adequately understand issues in the context of being LGBT, such as HIV/AIDS, mental illness, substance use, and sexual and physical violence."

While we see any patient who walks into our health centers, we specialize

in these specific areas that affect LGBT populations and we're committed to improving their health outcomes."

a mobile dental facility are also part of APLA.

While APLAHW and APLA operate as separate entities, there is no mistak-



To help achieve this, APLAHW applied for and received New Access Point grant funding from the federal Health Resources Services Administration—money made available by the Affordable Care Act. APLAHW is now recognized as a federally qualified health center (FQHC), and as such it provides primary medical and dental care, behavioral health services, HIV testing, PrEP counseling and management, STD screening/treatment, HIV specialty care, and health education services.

The FQHC designation encompasses the brand-new Gleicher/Chen Health Center in Baldwin Hills, the Wilshire Dental Clinic in downtown L.A. and HIV Testing and Behavioral Health Services at The David Geffen Center in Mid-City. The S. Mark Taper Foundation Dental Clinic in South L.A. and

ing that APLAHW grew out of the foundation APLA laid in 1983. APLAHW still receives some funding from APLA, and the organizations share the same spirit of helping people in the LGBT community—both HIV-positive and HIV-negative. "We are very much kindred organizations," Wagner says. "Now, however, we have expanded our mission and extended our reach. We have the ability to really change lives and help our communities in ways we didn't think was possible even five years ago."

Mikel Wadewitz is Director of Communications at APLA Health & Wellness.

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My Health LA fact sheets are now available in seven languages!

The MHLA fact sheets have been translated into seven languages and are now available on the MHLA website.

At the beginning of summer, the MHLA Program Office conducted an analysis of the five most-used languages (after English & Spanish). These languages are: **Armenian, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog and Thai.**

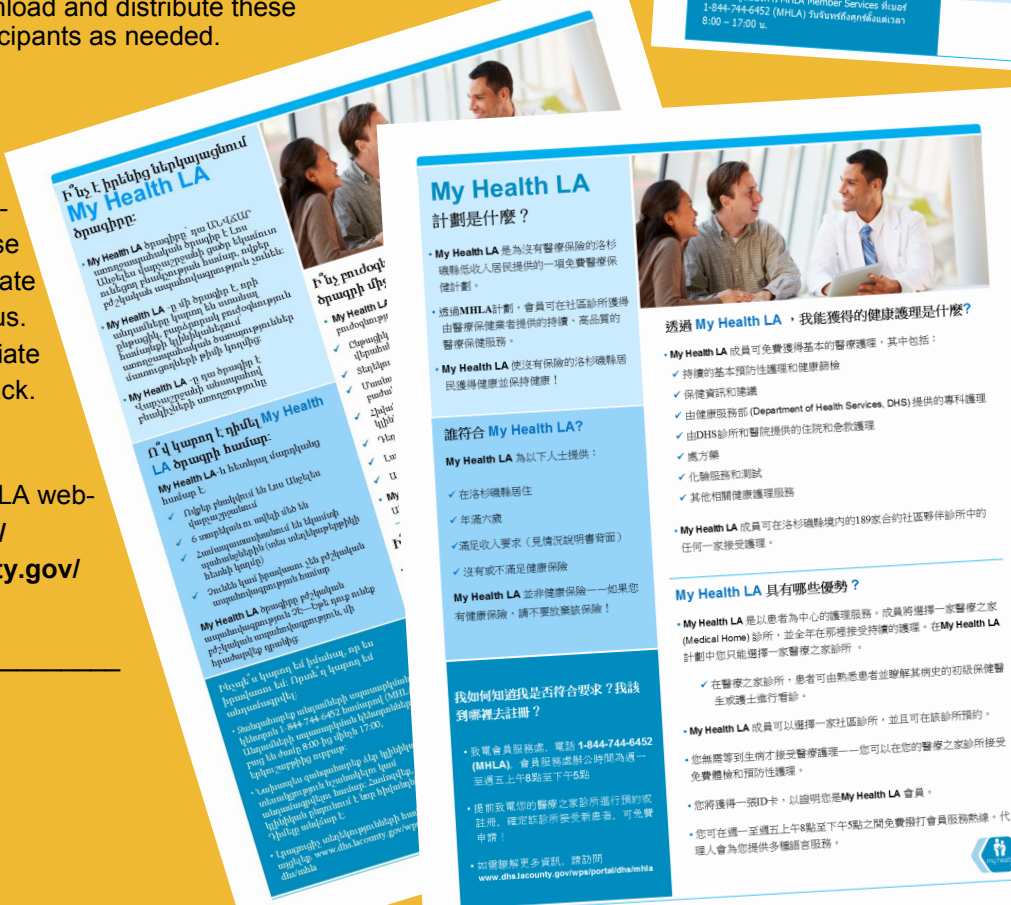
The following fact sheets are located within the "For MHLA Participants" section of the website in seven languages:

1. What is MHLA?
2. How do I Enroll?
3. Income Guidelines (Federal Poverty Level table)

Please download and distribute these to your Participants as needed.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us. We appreciate your feedback.

Visit the MHLA website at: <http://dhs.lacounty.gov/mhla>



Working together to renew MHLA applications

We have arrived at that time of the year when we have to start thinking about renewing MHLA applications for our very first program participants. As you all know, these participants must renew their application if they want to stay enrolled in MHLA.

There will be many patients who do not know they have to renew. The MHLA office needs your help to make sure that all of our participants are aware that they must renew their application or they will be disenrolled from the program, that they understand why renewal is important, and understand how and where to renew.

If a participant enrolled last fall, between August and October, it is time for them to renew. It may be helpful to remind your participants to consider the following when their time to renew approaches:

1. Renewing their application will provide peace of mind. Knowing that they have access to medical and health care services for 12 more months lets them focus on other parts of their lives.
2. Access to medicine: MHLA offers access to prescription medicines to prevent health problems and to improve their quality of life. Keeping their MHLA ensures that they continue to have access to these medicines when they need them.
3. Continuity with their health care: Remind them that their doctors and other health care providers are committed to their health. When they renew with MHLA, their medical home



clinic is able to provide them with ongoing, regular health care.

Additionally, you may find it appropriate to remind a participant that they can change their Medical Home during the renewal period. Some participants may have enrolled at a clinic far from their home – the renewal period is the best time for a participant to change their Medical Home for this kind of reason.

All MHLA participants will receive a reminder letter ninety (90) days before coverage ends. They can call their Medical Home clinic or MHLA Member Services at **1 (844) 744-6452** if they have any questions.

If you have questions about the renewal process, please contact your MHLA program advocate. They can answer your questions.

The MHLA Program Office in partnership with CCALAC has also put together a webinar on best practices for the renewal process. This will take place on **Tuesday, September 8th** (see next column for more information).

We hope this renewal period goes smoothly. We are excited for the second program year and we look forward to our continued collaboration with our MHLA partners! Thank you for all that you do!

Please join us for Renewal Best Practices Learning Session Webinar

When? Tuesday, September 8,
2015 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Who? Community Partners' One-e-App and Eligibility Leads, MHLA administrators, and CCALAC.

Why? This webinar intends to create a learning and sharing session on MHLA renewal best practices. The focus of the webinar is to share techniques and tools that can be adopted by all MHLA Community Partners to maximize our MHLA renewal efforts. Q & A session to follow the presentation.

How? An email was sent to all clinics with the link and phone number attached. If you did not receive it, please contact your MHLA program advocate or Amy Luftig Viste (aviste@dhs.lacounty.gov) who will forward it to you. If you cannot attend, this presentation will be recorded and uploaded to the website.

IMPORTANT: Webinar login slots are limited, so please coordinate your agency's staff to gather together and use a single conference phone & computer/projector set-up. This will minimize the number of logins and allow the maximum number of agencies possible to attend.

Hope you can attend!

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Try the new find a clinic link for the MHLA website: <http://dhs.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dhs/mhla/findaclinic>



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